



**State Representative • 3<sup>rd</sup> District**

# Timm Ormsby

## 2004 Session Highlights/ Voting Record

*Dear Friends,*

*Serving as your state representative since my appointment last year to this position has been a privilege, an honor, and an eye-opening experience that has been both educational and humbling – often, all at once!*

*I went to Olympia in January hoping to help move forward an agenda that focused on stimulating the economy and creating jobs; making quality health care more accessible and affordable; and improving Washington's schools, from kindergarten through college.*

*Although there are significant policy priority differences between the House (Democrat-controlled) and the Senate (Republican-controlled) we can and should work together across party lines. I hope to share information with you that will foster constructive dialogue on the issues, not worsen the partisan divide. In my limited experience, we get the best solutions by starting where we can agree.*

*It was a short session – just 60 days. But during those eight and a half weeks I had the opportunity to vote on hundreds of pieces of legislation, in committee and on the House floor. This newsletter contains a brief snapshot of some of the votes I cast, and some of the major bills that we dealt with as a Legislature.*

*I've also included a summary of your responses to the questionnaire that Rep. Alex Wood and I sent out at the beginning of the session. I'm grateful for all those responses, and for the countless emails, phone calls and letters I've received from residents of the 3<sup>rd</sup> district – offering advice, asking questions and requesting assistance. Please continue to provide me with your views on the issues and possible solutions.*

*It's been my privilege to represent you in Olympia. I will continue to do my best to make a positive difference for our community.*

*Sincerely,*

*Timm Ormsby*  
Timm Ormsby  
State Representative



### Committees:

Higher Education  
Trade and Economic Development

### Keeping in Touch

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**House of Representatives:**  
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### Spokane Office Opens

My legislative assistant, Richard Myers, and I have opened a district office in Spokane so that we can continue to serve constituents during the interim. I hope to meet as many of you as possible during the next few months, so please get in touch – or even come by weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. – if there is anything I can help you with.

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# Rep. Timm Ormsby • 3<sup>rd</sup> District

## Supplemental Operating Budget –

The operating budget that passed last year came down hard on some of our state's most vulnerable citizens, low income families, seniors and students. With that in mind, I was pleased to vote YES this year on a supplemental operating budget that made some critical repairs to last year's budget and addressed the need to do right by our economy, schools and health care services. Our no-new-taxes budget:

- Provides medical coverage for children in thousands of low-income families;
- Helps hospitals and clinics serve the under-served;
- Fills the shortfall in the Children's Vaccine Program;
- Gives colleges and universities \$17 million for additional enrollment slots;
- Increases financial aid for college students to help offset large tuition and fee increases;
- Gives Home Care Workers a long-overdue pay increase with benefits; and
- Encourages business and job growth through accountable, targeted tax incentives.

## Patient Safety & Medical Malpractice Reform –

The House addressed this extremely complex, multi-faceted issue by drafting and passing 17 different bills, each designed to solve a particular problem affecting the access to and affordability of health care and/or medical malpractice insurance, without trampling on the constitutional rights of citizens. I supported the entire package but others took the unfortunate position of "my way or not at all." Many positive reforms died in the Senate.

## Protecting Our Children –

Keeping our kids safe is one of our state's most important challenges. Our laws have to be tough, and they have to be smart. I voted YES for a good bipartisan measure that will assure longer sentences and more effective treatment for the largest possible number of child molesters. I also voted YES on a bill that makes it easier for schools to weed out job applicants with sexual misconduct in their backgrounds. Both bills were signed by the governor.

## Senior Property Tax Credit –

I voted YES to allow tens of thousands of additional seniors to qualify for a property tax exemption or reduction to help them live in their own homes in dignity. This much-needed bill passed the Legislature and was signed by the governor.

## Keeping Washingtonians on the Job –

Many national officials in Washington, D. C., say that exporting American jobs is good for the economy, but I don't know of a single person whose job went overseas or out-of-state that would agree. I supported a pair of measures that would have helped us to learn just how many Washington tax dollars were leaving the state to pay people for jobs that could and should have been done here at home. Neither survived the session, but I will continue to work on this common-sense issue.

## Apprenticeships –

I voted YES on a solid House bill that would have helped to provide unparalleled on-the-job training – on public works projects – for the next generation of skilled trades people. The bill died in the Senate but I will continue to fight for training opportunities that provide a family wage to our working citizens.

## Skills Centers –

I sponsored and voted YES on legislation to beef up the role of Washington's high-school level skills centers, including the outstanding Spokane Area Professional Technical Skills Center located in our district in NE Spokane. Economic strength for Washington demands good jobs of every type, not just in the computer and aerospace fields. A healthy society needs mechanics, chefs, medical techs and trades professionals who know how to build and maintain things that will last for generations. Our skills centers produce all these, and more, but the bill died in the Senate.

## Supplemental Capital Budget –

The state's construction budget is an important job-maker, and more, putting people to work right away building new schools, colleges and water projects. I gave the capital budget a solid YES vote.

- I was fortunate this year to have one of my key priorities included in this budget – \$31.6 million in funding for a combination library, classroom and office building on WSU's downtown-Spokane Riverpoint campus (in collabo-



# 2004 Voting Record

ration with EWU). This one piece of funding is good news in all three of my agenda areas of jobs, education and even health care, because one use of the new building will be to accommodate WSU nursing students.

- The capital budget also includes a little over \$300,000 to take care of emergency floor repairs in the SIRT building at Riverpoint.
- I worked for and was glad to see an allocation of \$8 million for the renovation of Senior Hall at EWU. Our community is larger than just our district, and this will be good news for students and future students throughout the region.
- Another piece of good news in the capital budget is \$3.2 million in construction funding for The Museum of Art & Culture.

## Teacher Scholarships –

One of the keys to student success is a high-quality, motivated teacher. That's why I SPONSORED and voted YES on HB 2708, which revives and improves a scholarship program designed to produce teachers in high-demand subjects like math, science and bilingual education. For every year that participating teachers satisfy the conditions of the scholarship by teaching a high-demand subject in the school to which they are assigned, we'll forgive a year's tuition. I'm extremely proud that this was my first bill to become law during my first session as your representative.

## Child Care Assistance for Spokane –

One item in the supplemental operating budget that needs a special mention is a \$500,000 increase in the child-care subsidy payments for licensed homes and centers providing child care for low-income families in Spokane. The DSHS rate calculation has historically put Spokane at a disadvantage compared with other urban areas in the state, and this adjustment is the first step toward equity for Spokane child-care providers. Many thanks to Sen. Lisa Brown for making this happen.

## WASL Reform –

We're demanding more of our high-school students, and that's a good thing. I voted YES on a bill providing for retakes and alternative assessments on the WASL exam, to help students who struggle with tests meet our state's high standards. I'm pleased that this long-overdue measure was signed into law by Gov. Locke.

## Learning Assistance Program –

I voted YES on a House bill and companion Senate bill to improve the way the LAP provides funding and technical assistance to underserved and underperforming schools. The new policy will make LAP assistance more meaningful by ending the practice of yanking the funding the moment student achievements begin to improve. The governor signed the Senate bill into law.

## Honoring School-District Levies –

State law limits funding from school levies to a percentage of state funding for schools. I voted YES on legislation to protect school levy revenues from losses due to the 2003 state budget cuts to schools, and to pump extra funds into levy equalization funding. Our success will provide school districts in Spokane County with an additional \$4 million in 2005 funding – including nearly \$2 million for the Spokane District alone. *(Governor signed)*

## Monroe Street Bridge –

I voted YES in support of a public-works bill that, among other things, provides \$1 million to help pay for ongoing work on the Monroe Street Bridge rehabilitation project in Spokane. Every dollar we can bring to town on a project like this translates into jobs and pumps up our local economy, and in this case it will also preserve a bridge that has been called the crown jewel of our city's infrastructure. This bill was signed by the governor.



## Mental-Health Parity –

Anyone who has ever suffered from a mental illness, or who has seen mental disease strike a member of his or her family, knows first-hand that these illnesses can be just as debilitating, and are often just as treatable, as most other medical problems. Currently, most insurance policies offer just second-class coverage (at best) for mental-health issues. That's why I voted YES for a bill that would require insurers to stop discriminating against mental-health patients. This bill passed the House and perished in the Senate.

## Hungry Families Act –

Hungry children are not healthy children, and they sure can't be expected to learn when their stomachs are growling in class. I voted YES for a good bill that extends food stamps for those who need them most, simplifies the paperwork that can present a real barrier to folks who need help, and institutes an innovative school lunch program that will feed hungry children year-round. I'm pleased that the governor signed this bill.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> District Sounds Off

Nearly a thousand 3<sup>rd</sup>-district constituents completed and returned the legislative-issue survey that Rep. Alex Wood and I sent out a few months ago — which I'm told by some old Capitol hands is a very gratifying response on a project of this kind. I appreciate the time and thought that you put into this. If you've ever wondered — and I bet you have — whether lawmakers actually see or pay attention to letters, phone calls, emails, questionnaires and other constituent contacts, the answer is yes.

As you may recall, the questions concerned Jobs, Health Care, Education, Taxes and Public Safety, and a final question gave you a chance to rate several issues in terms of their importance to you. Here is a summary of your responses:

**(Totals vary because not every respondent answered every question.)**

1. Do you know anyone who's lost their job?  
Yes – 665  
No – 165
2. Do you think offering tax incentives is a good way to help businesses succeed?  
Yes – 586  
No – 180
3. If so, would you still feel that way if it meant less funding for schools and health care?  
Yes – 204  
No – 500
4. Are you worried about losing your health insurance?  
Yes – 445  
No – 339
5. Should we save taxpayer money by buying medicines from Canada, even though the Bush administration wants to prevent this?  
Yes – 684  
No – 112

6. Should we prevent teacher strikes by requiring binding arbitration?  
Yes – 435  
No – 298
7. Should we divert money from public schools with vouchers?  
Yes – 223  
No – 555
8. Should Washington Promise Scholarships cover the full cost of tuition?  
Yes – 335  
No – 250
9. Do you think our tax system is fair to the middle class and working families?  
Yes – 170  
No – 622
10. Do you feel safe in your neighborhood?  
Yes – 588  
No – 210
11. Do you support longer sentences for violent criminals and shorter sentences for drug offenders?  
Yes – 567  
No – 155

**As for which issues** you considered the most important for legislators to address, the top three were clearly Jobs, Health Care, and Education, in that order. Here is the full list; the numbers in parentheses indicate how many respondents ranked a given issue as either number 1 or 2 in the questionnaire:

Jobs/The Economy (520)  
Health Care (375)  
Education (299)  
Public Safety (184)  
Environment (97)  
Higher Education (75)  
Social Services (75)  
Transportation (73)

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